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THE VAST  
IMPORTANCE  
OF THE  
HERRING FISHERY, &c.  
TO THESE  
KINGDOMS:

As respecting the NATIONAL WEALTH,  
our NAVAL STRENGTH, and the  
HIGHLANDERS.

In THREE LETTERS,  
Addressed to a Member of PARLIAMENT.

---

The SECOND EDITION.

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*If any Man hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*  
Mark iv. 23.

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T O

*Stephen Theodore Janssen, Esq;*

Member of PARLIAMENT for the  
City of *London*, &c.

S I R,

PERMIT me to address You as a distinguish'd *Friend* to your native Country and to Mankind, this being the most amiable Title I could think of; a Title that very few can justly claim, and which Kings may envy.

'Tis with the utmost Propriety that these Letters desire your Patronage; as Your Self, with two other most worthy Gentlemen, are well known to be the Soul of the important Patriot *Undertaking*, expatiated upon in the ensuing Sheets.

Your Opinion, (*Sir*) first turn'd my Thoughts to Subjects which demand the strictest Attention; Subjects tending to promote the Felicity of Mankind, both as Individuals and Nations; not to impose on them, by false Glosses, as is the Custom of  
venal



venal Politicians. And 'tis with Pride I pursue a *Theory*, which You illustrate with such universal Applause, in *Practice*.

With infinite Pleasure have I constantly survey'd You, in your rapid Advancement to true *Honours*; Honours that were foretold by me, and which, I am firmly persuaded, You will always merit. This can be no difficult Task for You, as Rectitude, good Sense, Humanity, and Diligence, are inseparable from your Nature. If the enjoying, without Envy, well-deserv'd *Distinctions*, is one of the greatest human Blessings, You surely must be a most happy Man.

I have nothing to add, except my warmest Wishes, that your Health may be perfect and uninterrupted, for your own Sake, and for that of your native Country, the serving of which is your darling Passion; and that I may be ever allow'd a Place in your Esteem; to deserve which has been the perpetual Study of,

S I R,

*Your most devoted Servant,*

J. Lockman.



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THE VAST  
**IMPORTANCE**  
 OF THE  
**HERRING FISHERY**  
 TO THE  
**BRITISH KINGDOMS.**

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L E T T E R I.

*Hark! 'tis the FISHERY!—This powerful Name  
 Must ev'ry British, Patriot Heart inflame.*

S I R,

**I** Doubt not of your hearty Concur-  
 rence, when I presume to affirm, that  
 the Subject of the following *Letter* is  
 of more Consequence to the Welfare of these  
 Kingdoms, than any Other which could be  
 sent you; and therefore claims the strictest  
 Notice of every Man who prides in being a

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BRIT-

BRITON, or has the least Regard for his native Country. I only wish that my Abilities were equal to my Zeal; for then the glorious *Undertaking* which I have ventur'd, tho' with the utmost Diffidence, to write upon, wou'd be set on Foot immediately. Some valuable *Pamphlets*, as well as *Letters*, communicated of late to the Public, have greatly open'd their Eyes; and made many worthy and able *Englishmen* wish very ardently, that an Undertaking which, after the most deliberate Examination both *within* and *without* Doors, promises so mighty and new an Acquisition of *Glory, Strength, and Riches* to these Nations, might be put in Execution with all the Speed consistent with Care; especially as *DELAYS* may, on a Variety of Accounts, be attended with the most fatal Consequences.

To excite the greater Attention, and at the same time Curiosity, I shall premise, that many of the best Hints now sent you, are extracted from some of the *PLANS* transmitted to the *Committee* sitting lately, in the City, on the *British Fisheries; Plans* drawn up by Gentlemen, perfectly conversant on the Subject treated on by them. As those relate to the present State of the *Fiseries* just mention'd, they inform us of a Multitude of very interesting and curious Particulars, not found in former Authors; or which could be of no Use for our Imitation, because of the  
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considerable Changes, in Things, brought about since their Time. Hence our being made acquainted with the Thoughts of late Writers, may prove of greater Benefit to the *Undertaking* in Question, than all the Speculations, in the same Way, of their Predecessors. As I would gladly be extremely intelligible, I therefore shall endeavour to write in some Order; and, for this Purpose, will now touch only on one Part of my Subject (that relating to the Improving of our NATIONAL WEALTH) which all Persons well acquainted with our *Circumstances*, will own to stand in the utmost Need of being speedily *improv'd*.

The Acquisition of RICHES, (and, at the same time, of *naval Strength*) by Means of the HERRING FISHERY, was so very important an Object in the Eye of our immortal EDWARD III. that it engross'd the most serious Thoughts of that sagacious Monarch; and thence gave Birth to excellent *Institutions*, many of which were afterwards copied by the indefatigable *Dutch*. Under the above Prince was enacted, as is observ'd by a late Writer \*, the famous *Statute of Herrings*.

\* See a Pamphlet, intitled, *The Wealth of Great Britain in the Ocean*, &c. Page 13. Printed for M. Cooper in Pater-noster-Row, and W. Owen in Fleet-street, 1749. Price One Shilling. This Treatise is infinitely the most extensive on the Herring Fishery.



That several of his Royal Successors entertain'd the most advantageous Idea possible of this *Fishery*, is manifest from the Acts of Parliament made, and the Establishments founded, in its Favour, during their respective Reigns. And the chief Causes why the several Undertakers of this *Fishery*, under the Successors of that King, failed in their Attempts, seem to have been their Want of proper Regulations, of Care, of fitting Authority to direct the Whole; and especially of a due and sufficient Fund or *Capital*; not to mention their ordering all the *Fish*, intended for Exportation, to be first brought to the Port of *London*; whereby they arriv'd too late at the foreign Markets.

According to some of our present Writers on the *Herring Fishery*, it appears, from the most authentic Testimonies, such as Sir *Walter Raleigh* and Pensionary *de Witte*, that the Inhabitants of the *United Provinces* formerly gain'd, from Two to Five Millions Sterling, every Year, by this *Fishery*. *De Witte* assures us, that it was the Possession of this Branch of *Commerce*, which enabled his Countrymen to contend so gloriously with their inveterate, rich, and mighty Enemies, the *Spaniards*. He adds, that the *Fisheries* gave Subsistence to *Four hundred and fifty Thousand* of his Countrymen. About the Beginning of the last Century, not only the *Dutch*, but also the *French*, with the Citizens  
of

of *Embsden*, *Hamburg*, and *Bremen*, employed themselves so very largely in this Trade, that it was computed they got, upon a Medium, out of our Seas, to the Value of between Six and seven Million Sterling every Year ; and it does not appear, that the Quantity of Fish, in our Seas, is lessened. The Reader will please to take particular Notice, that I am no ways for our quarrelling with any of our Neighbours, or others. The Ocean affords so ample a Supply, that the various Nations need not envy or annoy one another.

As our Friends, the *Dutch*, gained such immense *Wealth*, by this *Commerce*, it was always very justly styled one of the main *Pillars* of their Commonwealth ; and is still termed such, on a Multitude of Occasions: That industrious Nation used, when their Glory was at its Meridian, to employ 3000 Busses, or Fishing-Vessels, ( besides *Jaggers*, or *Tenders*, &c. ) with 40,000 Seamen ; not to mention the prodigious Multitudes of People, which this Trade used to set at Work on Shore. Farther : In a *Dutch Placart*, or Proclamation, published in 1624 \*, the *Fishery* is called the GOLDEN MINES of the *United Provinces*. In another *Pla-*

\* See a Pamphlet entitled, *England's Path to Wealth and Honour*. Page 11. Printed for F. Gogan in Fleetstreet, 1750. Price One Shilling. There are a great many valuable Particulars in this Piece.

cart †, dated the 10th of May 1651, the *Herring-Fishery* is termed *the principal MINE*, (which Name is likewise given to it by *De Witte*) and chief SUPPORT of *Holland*, &c. And great Stress is laid on its Importance, in the *Instructions to the Dutch Mates*, dated so lately as the 23d of May 1749. Hence we need not doubt that, if this most extensive Branch of Commerce was carried on, by us, with due Skill, Integrity, and Spirit, it would bring annually into these Kingdoms a vast Flow of Treasure and Merchandise, to the enriching both of the People and the *Revenue*; and thus prove of much more Consequence to the Nation, than some of our *American Settlements*.

A Circumstance which ought to wake us from our surprizing Lethargy is, that the greatest Part of the Wealth, arising from this *Fishery*, is acquired chiefly by Foreigners, on the Coasts of the *British Dominions*: These being the most happily situated, for the *Fishery* in question; and our Herrings being found better, more certain, and in larger Quantities, than in any other Part of the World; as will be observed more fully hereafter.—To demonstrate that this Scheme is no idle *Chimæra*, it was executed by some of our Countrymen, 1738; when it was

† See an *English Translation* of it, with that of the *Instructions to the Dutch Mates*. Sold by *W. Owen*, near *Temple-Bar*. Price 6 d.

found,



found, that our People caught and cured *Herrings* as well as the *Dutch*; and sold them (even earlier than they) for as high a Price at *Hamburg* and *Bremen*. And if the Gentlemen here hiated at, dropped their *Undertaking*, the only Cause was, their Despair of being favoured in the *Salt-Duties*, occasioned by the Removal of the *Minister*, who had promised to befriend them in this Particular.

'Tis certain that some Foreigners reap prodigious Benefit, a Multitude of Ways, by the Fisheries on our Coasts; they sometimes coming in Fleets (of above 300 Sail) within, from three to six Miles of our Shores, and so might advance, with equal Justice and Propriety, as far into our Island, and there sow and reap Grain. How would it startle an *Englishman*, was he to hear, that some Foreigners had come, without leave, into one of our Maritime Towns, and sow'd Corn round about it, and which he intended to reap! And yet very few of us seem alarmed, when we are told of Incroachments made, by some Nations more vigilant than ourselves, on our watry Dominions. But we are injured still more, by the *grand Herring-Fisbery*, near *Brassa Sound*, off the Islands of *Sbetland*, belonging to the *British* Crown. Of this farther Mention will be made in a subsequent Letter.

As

As to the trite Objection, of there being no foreign *Markets* for us to sell our *Fish* at; 'tis answered, that the Demand for *Herrings* is allowed to be as considerable as ever, though some Nations, for various Reasons, which might be enumerated, don't send a third Part of the Vessels they used to do formerly. A further Proof that this Demand is not abated, is, the Attention which some Nations, at a Distance from us, have lately given to the *Fisheries*, and which they seem resolved to pursue with Vigour. Let me add, that the Gentlemen concerned in the present noble *Undertaking*, know of several Markets for the Disposal of our *Herrings*, &c. provided they be of a Good Sort, and well packed and cured. 'Tis remarkable that a certain *French* Writer, famous for his Skill in every Branch of *Commerce*, affirms: *That if the Scotch Herrings were cured and packed as skilfully as the Dutch, they would not only be as good as those brought into Holland, but even preferable to them in Point of Flavour.* From all that is said above, it is evident, that there is Opportunity for *Great Britain* to gain vast Treasures, by this Branch of Trade, which, if properly conducted, will not only prove of great Benefit to Individuals; but may likewise enable us to extricate Posterity, and perhaps ourselves, from our present most burthensome, most grievous DEBT; and which, an Increase of our only, can clear. As

As the Situation of our Circumstances is not very auspicious, shall we continue thus shamefully inactive? Shall we, when a glorious Prospect opens, neglect the numberless Emoluments to which it invites us? With equal Judgment might a Man, harassed perpetually by his Creditors, slight an Overture which should be made him, by some generous Friend, of re-establishing his unhappy Affairs. The like kind Offer is made us by Gentlemen of Character, who have the Welfare of their native Country sincerely at Heart: Whence it may be hoped, that there is still Wisdom enough left in the Nation, for it to embrace a Proposal which promises such lasting Advantages.

'Tis with infinite Reluctance, that I even glance at the present melancholy Aspect of our National *Affairs*; especially, as Observations of this Sort, are frequently considered, as arising from a Spirit of Discontent, of Envy, or, more odious, *Jacobitism*. But I love my Country, and I love my King: And therefore, to imagine that I am actuated by any such bad Principles, would be putting the unkindest Construction on the most amicable Views. To prove that Reflexions, like to those hinted at a little above, are not ill-grounded, let us only take a View of the following additional Burthens laid annually on the Subject, during the Course of the late War.



# Anno

1742	24,000	out of the Sinking Fund, on	800,000
1743	54,000	Duty on Low Wines	1,800,000
1744	54,000	on the Surplus of ditto	1,800,000
1745	60,000	Duty on Wines	2,000,000
1746	120,000	Ditto, on Glafs	3,000,000
1746	40,000	Licenfes for retailing Spirituous Liquors	1,000,000
1747	40,000	Tax on Coaches	1,000,000
1747	176,000	Ditto, on Windows (Houfes.)	4,400,000
1748	280,000	Duty on dry Goods imported at 5 per Cent.	7,000,000
1749	120,000	out of the Sinking Fund, on	3,000,000
1750	30,000	out of Ditto	1,000,000
Total	998,000		

# Now

Now as the above *Total* is an Increase (very near a MILLION Sterling) of our yearly LOAD; is it not absolutely necessary that we cherish (since we have no other Way left to remove this excessively heavy Load from our Shoulders) any Expedient by which its Weight may be rendered less afflicting? To ease the Nation, our Legislators lately made a considerable *Reduction* in the Properties of Many, who could ill bear to have their *Incomes* lessen'd. If therefore Oeconomy becomes us, at this Juncture; ought we not, from the same laudable Spirit, to encourage, One and All, a *Scheme*, which calls us to a Fountain (as it were) whence *Riches* are perpetually flowing?

The famous *Columbus* came to *England*, and offer'd the Discovery of *America* to our Crown, but his Proposal was slighted; for which great Numbers censure the *Monarch* \* whom he address'd for the above Purpose. Whether our Possession of the rich *Peruvian Mines*, &c. would have been of Benefit to this Nation, is justly question'd by many. But every one acquainted with the Genius and Situation of our Island, and the present gloomy Face of our Affairs, will grant, that shou'd we neglect to open, as speedily as possible, the MINES (if I may be allow'd

\* *Henry VII.*

the Figure) lying round the *British* Dominions, and now so happily pointed out to us; other Nations may, with the strictest Propriety, rank us in the Class of the *Ten foolish Virgins*.

But a Circumstance which ought more especially to rouse us, is the Declaration his MAJESTY has condescended to repeat from the Throne, in the gracious Words following. *Let me earnestly recommend to you THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR COMMERCE, and cultivating the ARTS OF PEACE, in which you may depend on my hearty Concurrence and Encouragement* \*. And on another Occasion: *Whatever good LAWS you shall propose for THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR TRADE AND NAVIGATION, and FOR ENCOURAGING A SPIRIT OF INDUSTRY IN ALL PARTS OF THE KINGDOM, will be extremely acceptable to me* †.

'Tis a well-known old Maxim that, Let a King set an Example, and the whole World will follow it.

*Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.*

Now as the intended *Fishery* offers us all the Advantages so graciously mention'd by his

\* KING's Speech, 29 Nov. 1748.

† KING's Speech, 16 Nov. 1749.



*Majesty*; we have the strongest Reason to hope, that our Countrymen will not be an Exception to the above Rule. So far from it, surely no one will presume to call himself a BRITON, who shall refuse to conspire with the indulgent and beneficent Views of his *Sovereign*; and not endeavour to promote an *Etablissement*, whence such mighty Things are expected for the Benefit of this Country; whose Prosperity is most ardently wish'd by

S I R,

12 March,  
1749-50.

Your, &c.

LET-

## L E T T E R II.

BRITONS! *wou'd ye the Ocean's Sway secure,  
Yourselves to the bold Fisher's Toils inure.*

S I R,

I N my former Letter, relating to the Establishment of a grand HERRING FISHERY, &c. from this Island, I took notice of the vast Increase they might give to our WEALTH; and, at the same time, to the REVENUE. I shall now proceed to an Article of no less Concern; I mean the mighty Addition which these *Fisheries* would, very probably, give to our NAVAL STRENGTH; once our *Pride*, and most noble *Characteristic*.

'Tis well known, that *Land* and *Trade* constitute the two great natural *Interests* of the *British* Kingdoms; (for that of *Money*, tho' made to govern *Both*, has too often prov'd as a Canker in the Body-Politic, and the Root of numberless Evils.) Between the two first *Interests* a sort of connubial Tye is form'd, whence their Happiness or Infelicity is reciprocal; the Value of *Lands* rising or falling, in Proportion as our Trade is in a flourishing or sickly State, and *vice versa*; and yet we, so far from considering them as  
Man

*Man and Wife*, have sometimes ungratefully treated one of them as a *Harlot*. But 'tis now in the Power of the third *Interest* (*Money*) to restore the Other, just mention'd, to her natural Rights and Privileges; and thus atone, in some measure, for her past pernicious Conduct.

But that Branch of our venerable *Legislature*, in whose House the *Herring Fishery* Bill now lies, have discover'd the just Sense they entertain, of the strong Union and Harmony which ought to subsist between *Land* and *Trade*, by the great Countenance they have perpetually shewn to the *Bill* in question, and their indefatigable Endeavours to promote it. Toils like these are truly *Patriot*, and give unfading Honours. There is no doubt, but the like Favour will be continued, whenever this *Bill* shall appear before them again: And the same Indulgence is naturally expected, from the generous Disposition of the other august *Assembly*; especially as his MAJESTY has most graciously signified, his Approbation of every *Undertaking* whence his faithful Subjects may reap Advantage.

The *Fisheries* have ever been consider'd, by those who are Judges of them, as one of the best Nurseries for training up industrious, bold, well-season'd Mariners. From these *Fisheries*, the Royal *Fleets* might, in any Emergency, be mann'd with Certainty and Expedition; and our *trading Ships* supplied with



with fit Hands; the Want of which has often prov'd exceedingly detrimental to many valuable Branches of our Commerce. Besides that, (to mention this only by the way) the present extravagant *Duties* on Goods lessen the Number of *Merchants*, and consequently of *Seamen*. Ten thousand of the *Fishermen* we are speaking of, with the usual Compliment of Marines, Landmen, &c. wou'd, on any urgent Occasion, man an hundred Ships of War of different Rates. The prodigious Difficulty of supplying our Fleets with Sailors, in the Beginning of the late War, was so justly and so loudly complain'd of, by some of our ablest naval Commanders, that it would argue the greatest Want of Wisdom in Us, not to guard against any such destructive Inconveniencies, in time to come. Hence it is absolutely necessary that we provide, as soon as possible, for those Sailors who are dismiss'd our Service. As their Number is very much reduc'd, by the late Treaty of *Peace*; should these see no farther Prospect of getting a Livelihood in their native Country, they will justly and wisely endeavour to procure one in any other. We know, by the most authentic Informations, that great Numbers of our Seamen are gone into foreign Service, as others have done into foreign *Fisheries*. How greatly the late wise Cardinal *de Fleury* improv'd the *French Commerce*, was evident from

from the vast Increase of the Merchant Ships of that Nation, to the infinite Prejudice of our Trade in general, and that of our Colonies in particular. As the Seamen who are gone from us will scarcely be brought back, either by the Intreaties of their Countrymen, or the Terror of a Proclamation; our own *Interest* (abstracted from *Gratitude*, to Men who serv'd us so gallantly and so faithfully, in Seasons of Danger) should induce us to procure, with all imaginable Speed, some Employment for such of them as still continue among us; to prevent their being forc'd abroad; or their being reduced to the sad Alternative, either of begging from Door to Door; or of plunging into Crimes that may bring them to a fatal End, of which we have already had many melancholy Instances.---- Thrice happy will it therefore be for *Great-Britain*, if our Seamen, who form so valuable a Part of the Commonwealth, may, by the Expedient here humbly submitted to the Public, be kept near at hand; to defend us in Time of War, and be render'd more useful to us in Time of Peace!

Our *naval* Power will be considerably increas'd, and our Country much better defended, by a Clause happily added to the *Fishery Bill*; I mean the Liberty which all the maritime Towns, in our Island, are allow'd, of subscribing towards this grand Undertaking; a *Clause*, the more remarkable, as

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it proves that the Founders of this Scheme do not any ways intend to make it a Monopoly. The Mind of Man could not possibly devise a more natural, or more effectual Defence for an Island, than to cause its Coasts to be cover'd, and guarded by Towns well inhabited ; and that by Persons of considerable Property, who must be able, and would be willing, to oppose, with all imaginable Vigour, any foreign Invaders. This, doubtless, was the chief Motive, which prompted our sage Ancestors, to confer various Privileges and Immunities on our *Sea-Ports*. Hence it is that the Representatives of the *Cinque-Ports* are styl'd *Barons* ; and are still allow'd, at the Coronation of our Monarchs, to support the Canopy ; signifying, emblematically, in antient Times, that they undertook to cover our Sea-Coasts, in like Manner as they, in the august *Ceremony* above-mention'd, supported the Covering of the Royal Head. Such a Distinction was due to the *Cinque-Ports*, as they fronted the *French* Coasts ; and, being most expos'd, were therefore under the strictest Obligation to be, at all Times, able and ready to defend themselves ; and thus preserve the interior Part of the Country. Such a Policy would deserve Attention in this Age ; inas-much as it might prove our Security, (without putting us to any additional Expence,) against Depredations from small Vessels which should escape the Vigilance of our Fleets, in  
Time



Time of War ; and free us from the Necessity of dividing our regular Troops, in order to defend a Multitude of Places upon the Coasts of our Island \*.

The Establishment of the *Fishery* in Question, might put a Stop to the barbarous Custom of *impressing* Seamen, and tearing them from their Families : a Practice so disgraceful to the Nation, so repugnant to *Magna Charta*, so unworthy of human Nature, and therefore so warmly inveigh'd against, by some of the most judicious Chiefs of our Navy ; a Practice which has prov'd the Ruin of Multitudes of poor Families, and the Destruction of some valuable Branches of Trade ; not to mention its having been *the Bane of our Fishery*, in the late War. This abominable Practice affects not only the common *Sailors*, but is sometimes scandalously extended to the *Mates*, and even to the *Masters*, of our trading Vessels. Farther : What can be more inhuman, than to impress Mariners at their Return from tedious and painful Voyages ; without permitting them to tread their belov'd native Shore, or giving them the Consolation of embracing their Relations and Friends ? And yet Custom has so far reconcil'd us to this shocking Practice, that many severe Attempts of it are only made

\* Vide a Pamphlet, entitled *Considerations on the white Herring and Cod Fisheries*, Page 44, 45. Printed for M. Cooper in Pater-noster-Row. Price One Shilling. This Treatise merits our serious Perusal.

the Subject of Laughter. I remember that, a very few Years since, at a Juncture when our Fleets were in great Distress for want of *Sailors*; a Midshipman, at the Head of his impressing *Banditti*, stole, in the Dead of Night, into one of our Villages upon the *Thames*; when crying out *Fire*, the hapless Watermen left their Beds, and hurrying, naked, into the Streets, were instantly seiz'd; and soon after dragg'd like Felons, on Board the *Tenders*. Such a Stratagem may, indeed, be admir'd and applauded by ignorant *Savages*; but must surely be the strongest Reproach to a Nation which pretends (and be it not justly said of us, that it is mere Pretence!) to Knowledge, and the Practice of the social Virtues.----How would the Reader's Indignation and Anger rise, should I affirm, that Doors are often broke open, Windows burst through, Floors tore up, and innocent Fathers of Families sometimes murder'd, on these horrid Occasions! For the Truth of which I appeal to the Inhabitants of *Wapping*, *Shadwell*, &c.

'Tis strange to consider, (a Reflection which may fill a good-natur'd Mind with Melancholy) that a Set of People, who are universally allow'd to be of infinite Advantage to their native Country, should yet be expos'd to *Rigours*, from which almost all other Bodies of Men are exempt; and that too in a Country whose darling Boast, once,  
was

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was LIBERTY: *Rigours* (I say) v. often drag the valuable Men, whose Advocates we are, from a comfortable Subsistence, and perhaps a much lov'd Family, and hurry them to necessary Perils that often prove fatal; or, if they do come back unhurt, may not restore them to their former happy, tho' contracted Circumstances; but ungratefully turning them adrift, by their being discharg'd the Service, exposes them to the Mercy of a hard-hearted World. Here I cannot forbear quoting four Verses (for the Sake of the Sense contain'd in them) transcrib'd from a Window of a Country Inn.

*Our God and Sailors we alike adore,  
Just on the Brink of Danger, or before:  
After Deliverance they're alike requited,  
Our God Neglected, and our Sailors slighted.*

As Matters now stand, it sometimes were better for such Sailors, to be disabled at Sea, than to come off unmaimed; since, in the former Case, a most laudable Provision is made them, for Life.

To return: Reason therefore, as well as the common Dictates of Humanity, (to put *Gratitude* and *Interest* out of the Question,) call loudly upon us, to cast about, as soon as possible, for some Method, which may prevent our being obliged, in future Emergencies, to have recourse to the detestable



testable Practice above hinted at. And none, (I presume) can be so conducive to this sage and salutary Purpose, as the establishing a Grand *Herring-Fishery*.

This *Fishery* would likewise answer every wise End proposed, in keeping up a Body of *registered* Seamen; a Subject which has often been judged worthy the Thoughts of Parliament; since it would save our Government the great Expence, requisite for maintaining such a Body of *Seamen*; and be, on many Occasions, of more private Advantage to the latter, as the *Fishery* would afford them a comfortable Subsistence. Not to mention, that those Men, by being exercised in the *Fishery*, must be much better seasoned to the Service, than registered *Seamen*; as these would, in all Probability, spend a considerable Part of their Time on Shore, when not employed in the necessary Service of their Country.

To conclude: As we seem by our being an Island, as well as by our Situation on the Globe, to have been formed by Providence, for ploughing the *Sea*, as well as the *Land*; let us answer its beneficent Views, and devote ourselves, far more extensively, to an Element whose Bosom teems with *Riches*; the acquiring of which, will at the same Time, procure other signal Advantages to the British Empire.

14 March 1749-50. I am Sir, &c.

L E T-

## L E T T E R    I I I .

*In fishing Arts the HIGHLANDERS employ,  
Then will their Swords no more our Peace annoy.*

S I R,

**C**OULD *Solon* rise from the Dead, and survey with his Eye, the greatest Part of our Island, how would he be delighted with its cultivated Face, the excellent Form of our Government, and the Progress of Arts and Sciences among us ! On the other Hand, how much would he be surprized, when turning to another Part of *Great Britain*, he should perceive it to be unimprov'd, in a considerable Measure, by the sagacious Hand of Art, and the Inhabitants roving about like so many Savages ! But how would the Astonishment of this *Legislator* increase, when he should be farther inform'd, that the Mountaineers dwelling in those Tracts, thus strangely neglected by the rest of their Countrymen, had been Injudiciously permitted to be tamper'd with by their *Lairds*, or *Chiefs* ; and impiously prevail'd upon, to take up Arms against their native Island !

Thus circumstanced were the *Highlanders* with regard to the other *Britons*, and to certain  
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Foreigners, who set at work all the Engines possible, to make them odious to the rest of their Countrymen. Hence those Mountaineers are charged with being naturally *rebellious*; tho' they become so merely, by the wicked Impressions made on their dark, rude Minds: Hence they are termed a lazy People, at the same Time that this is owing to their want of Employment: It having always been the destructive Policy of the Highland *Chiefs*, to keep their Clans, from Age to Age, in Idleness and Ignorance: Being perfectly sensible, that Knowledge and Trade, by opening the Eyes of their *Slaves*, and giving them a Taste of the Sweets of Property, would naturally be followed by Independence. Men of Knowledge will be (what Heaven intended they should,) *free*; And none but the illiterate can submit to *Shackles*. That this despised People have a Genius for *Manufactures*, is evident from their Tartan or Plaid; the whole of which is framed in, and by, each Family respectively; and the curious *Arms* they make, is a Demonstration of their Genius for Mechanicks. No Nation could be more ignorant and barbarous than the *Russians*; and yet the Light of Science has, within the Compass of a few Years, wrought an amazing Change, in that so long Gothic People.

The *Highlanders* used to pay a blind Obedience to their *Laird*; First, because he fed them,



them, (tho' this often cost them dear;) And Secondly, because they ignorantly thought him the greatest Man upon Earth. But our Governours purchas'd very wisely, not long since, the *Highland* Jurisdictions or Superiorities; so that Nothing seems now wanting, but to find out some laudable Employment for the common People of that Country; and thus convince them, that *Liberty* is the first of Blessings; and *Loyalty* to his Majesty King *George*, their chief Interest.

As there are many fine Harbours, with a vast Variety of Fish of all Sorts on the Coasts of *Scotland*, it must be unpardonable in us; as it would argue Ingratitude to ourselves, and even towards Heaven, not to turn our natural Advantages into their proper Channel; by making a Part of the Ocean belonging to ourselves, whence Foreigners have so long drawn immense Wealth, the Support of our own People. A remarkable Circumstance is, that the Coasts of *Great Britain* being very rich, the Soil breeds a Sullidge that swims near to it; and on this Sullidge, (which draws the Fish to us, and is peculiar to our Coasts,) feed all floating Fish, such as *Mackarel*, *Herrings* and *Pilchards*.

To be more particular: On the northwest Coasts of the *Highlands* of *Scotland*, is an extensive and very certain *Fishery*: Yet is it

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utterly neglected, tho' no Ways disturbed by Foreigners ; and this, because those Coasts are full of Islands, where the Tides run so strong, that large Fishing-Vessels cannot fish near them. Here is fine Shelter, and very good Food for the *Fish*. 'Tis a *Coast-Fishery*, and must be carried on mostly by open Boats. The Inhabitants of these Parts are quite Strangers to foreign Trade ; and pay the most submissive Homage to the Command of their imperious *Lairds*. Hitherto no one from the *Low-Lands* has attempted to settle among them. By this Means, their Country remains almost in its primitive State ; though its Soil, in many Places, is exceedingly good, and very improveable. These wild Inhabitants, like the *American* Savages, think of Nothing but how to supply their immediate Wants ; and for this they need to be at little Pains ; their Mountains being stock'd with all Sorts of Cattle, and their Rivers abounding with Fish. The Lochs, or Lakes, on the Coasts of *Strathnavern*, and the Shire of *Ross* ; and some near the Town of *Stornway*, upon the great *Lewes* Island, are the most noted for *Herrings*. Formerly some hundred Vessels, from fifty to sixty Tons, used to load *Herrings* every Year, in those Lochs, which very seldom fail'd of *Fish* : However, this *Fishery* has not been so much pursued, since  
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the Rebellion. The Islands of North and South *Vist*, and about *Barra*, (all among the Western Islands,) are very famous for *Cod* and *Ling*. There is great Plenty of *Herrings*, as well as of *White-Fish*, about the Island of *Sky*; tolerable good Ones in some of the Lochs of the Island of *Mull*; but those in *Lochfin*, and the Coast of *Aire*, are excellent. The Coasts of the Islands of *Isla* and *Jura*, with those of *Kintyre*, and the Island of *Arran*, furnish very good *Cod*. (On this Occasion the Reader is desired to lay the State of the *British* Islands before him.)----But it were needless to expatiate on the very advantageous *Fisheries*, which might be carried on, about the Coasts of *Scotland*.

The *Highlands*, which are divided into into North and West, contain vast Tracts of Territory; part being on the main Land, (as it is called) *Scotland*; and the rest form the Islands of *Sky*, *Mull*, &c. Some Districts of their Country are populous enough, and the Vallies fruitful. They are, in general, a strong hardy People; their Abode on, or Passage over high Mountains; the pure Air they breathe on them, and their unadulterated Food, (provided they have but enough) contributing greatly to their Health and Vigour. These *Mountaineers* have proved as ruinous and disgraceful to our Nation as



the *Sailors* have been of Advantage and Glory to it; and yet the former, instead of being dangerous to us, could be rendered exceedingly beneficial. Multitudes of them might, under proper Regulations, be retained very usefully in the *Herring* and *Cod Fisheries*; and fishing Vessels manned, in the Proportion of 12 *Seamen* to 8 *Highlanders*, or thereabouts; at the same time that the Wives and Children of the Latter, would be set at Work on Shore. By the Neglect of these *Fisheries*, great *Naval Strength*, and vast *Treasures* have been utterly lost to these Kingdoms; whence we may firmly be persuaded, that our sage *Legislators* will no longer permit so large a Body of useful Men, to rust in Sloth, Poverty, and Ignorance; but excite them, by due Rewards, to cultivate their far-extended Wastes; and to fish properly in the adjacent Waters, as their laudable Industry will be recompenced with so many Blessings. The *Arabians*, have a *Proverb*, that *the busied Man has ever one Devil to plague him; but that he who lives in Indolence, is perpetually tormented with a thousand of those evil Spirits*. Our Nation, in general, cannot but be exceedingly desirous of seeing the *Highlanders* settled in some profitable Way of Life; as their Indolence, their Servility and Wretchedness, have too often been productive of the most horrid

horrid Effects. Witness the *Rebellion* in 1715 and 1745.

If it be a just *Maxim*, (and who can doubt the Truth of it?) that a due Number of industrious Individuals, constitute the Strength and Riches of a Country, Self-Interest should strongly urge us, to make the *Highlanders* of Benefit to the rest of the Nation; and consequently our Neglect in this Particular, will argue amazing Supineness in us, (to give it the softest Term.) No one can be more sensible than myself, of the vast Utility which frequently springs from the Planting of *Colonies*; nor is better persuaded, of the numberless Advantages that may accrue to our Settlements in *North America*, and consequently to the Nation, from the prudent Establishment of our *Colony* in *Nova Scotia*, (which Heaven therefore prosper!) and yet it would appear very strange to me, should we, after sailing cross the wide Western Ocean, at a great Expence, and running some Hazard, to reduce *Savages*, and settle in their Country, continue to neglect the civilizing and employing the *Half-Savages* of our Own. On this Occasion, methinks, the well-known *Proverb* might be justly applied, *Charity begins at home*. But if neither *Charity*, nor that stronger Motive *Interest*, can rouse us, for the Purpose I am speaking of; surely our own *Security* will do this, for the same weighty

weighty Reason, that a wise Man would endeavour to correct any peccant Humour in his Body, in order to keep every Part of it healthy and vigorous.

Farther: All Persons inclined to the *Naturalization Bill*, must necessarily be Friends to the Argument I here humbly espouse. Every Reason urged in Favour of the above *Bill*, will hold much stronger with regard to our engaging the *Highlanders* in the *Fishery*; since, if it be granted, that the sending over for *Foreigners*, to People this Island, would prove of great Emolument to it; surely the civilizing and employing Part of our Natives, by whom we are grievously annoyed, at Intervals, must be of still greater Importance to our Welfare. To waft *Colonies* abroad, and invite *Foreigners* to settle here, at the same time that we should overlook a vast many thousands of our Countrymen, would, (or I am greatly mistaken) discover such a Policy as a *Harrington* or a *Sydney* must laugh at, and few could attempt to justify.

I shall use but one Reason more, though many occur, to enforce my Argument, and this is: That we ought carefully to preserve the Lives of the *Highlanders*, in common with those of our other Countrymen; since the necessary Havock made of the former, in *Rebellions*, is not only a Loss to ourselves,  
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but likewise to our Posterity ; these being deprived of the numberless Descendants of such of the *Highlanders* as die in Battle ; and who, had they rose to Being, would probably have been of Service to their Country.

*March 16,*  
1749-50.

*Sir, Yours, &c.*

*F I N I S.*

( 33 )

but likewise our Porters, who have been  
driven of the new roads, and who, it is  
said, had they been in the same  
position, would probably have been of some use to the  
country.



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